



south ayrshire
health & social care
partnership

Independent Advocacy Plan Engagement Report



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Summary

This report outlines the various engagement activity that has taken place throughout the development of the Independent Advocacy Plan. Various methods of engagement were used such as one to one interviews, focus groups, an online survey, informal chats and information sessions. This engagement took place over a period of roughly 6 weeks - from the 19th of March until the 1st of May.

Online Survey

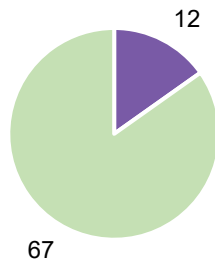
A survey targeted at both staff and people who use advocacy services was developed to inform the plan. The survey aimed to gain an understanding of how much people know about advocacy, how those who use advocacy find the support and how advocacy can be improved in South Ayrshire. The survey went live on the 19th of March and was available for just over 6 weeks with a closing date of the 1st of May. A total of 79 people responded to the survey, 12 service users and 67 staff members/service providers.

The survey included the following questions. The questions in black were for everyone. The purple questions were for service users only and the blue questions were for staff only.

1. Are you a member of the public who has used advocacy or a service provider?
2. Which advocacy services have you previously used or are currently using?
3. Are you aware of any of the following services?
 - Circles Advocacy
 - Barnardo's Here4U
 - Who Cares? Scotland
 - Other
4. Do you know where to signpost or how to refer members of the public to advocacy services?
5. How did you find accessing advocacy services in South Ayrshire?
6. How did you find the support from advocacy services?
7. Was it easy for you to express your views through your advocate?
8. What do you think could improve advocacy services within South Ayrshire?

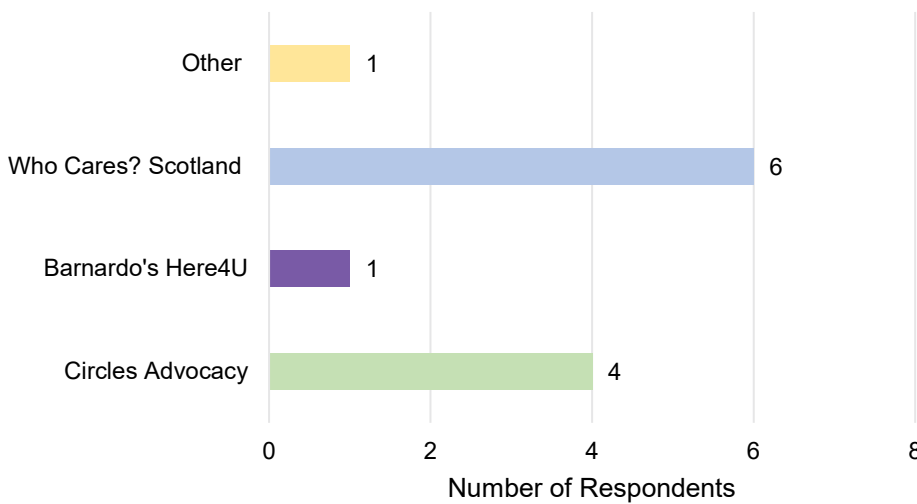
1. Are you a member of the public who has used advocacy or a service provider?

15% of the survey respondents were people who have used advocacy.



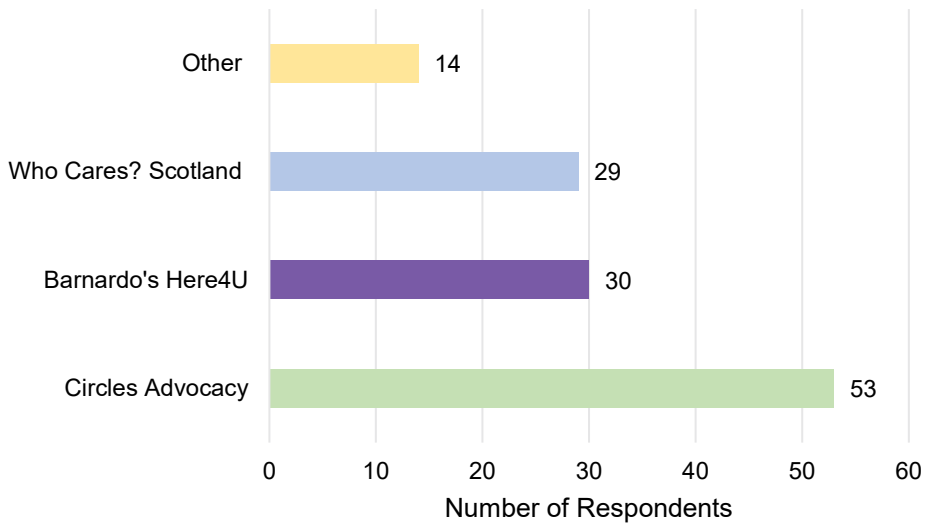
■ Member of the public who has used advocacy
 ■ Service Provider/Staff

2. Which advocacy services have you previously used or are currently using?



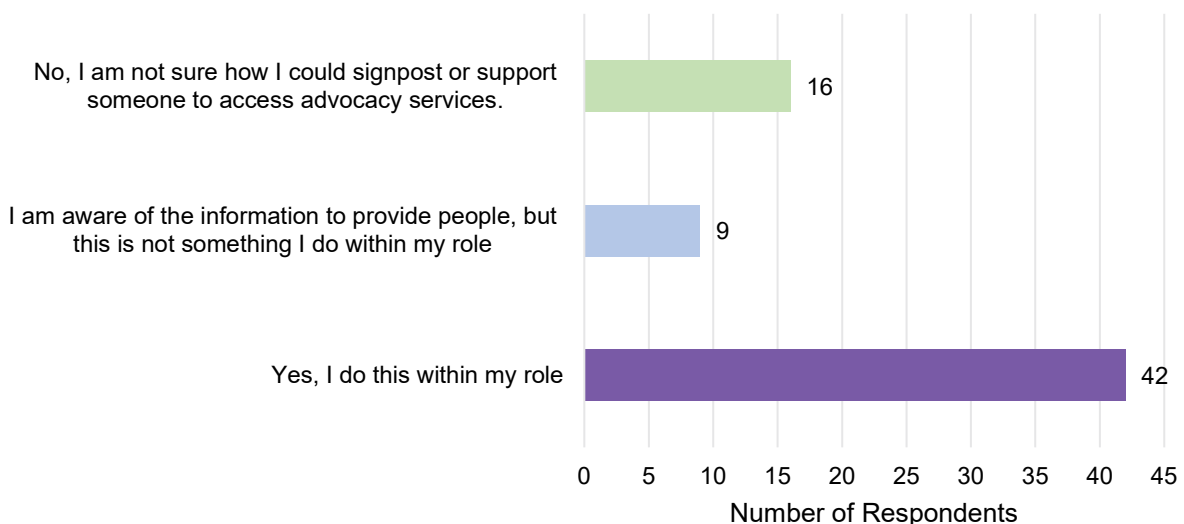
50% of respondents use the service provided from Who Cares? Scotland. 32% from Circles and 8% from Circles Advocacy and South Ayrshire Council Advice Hub.

3. Are you aware of any of the following services?



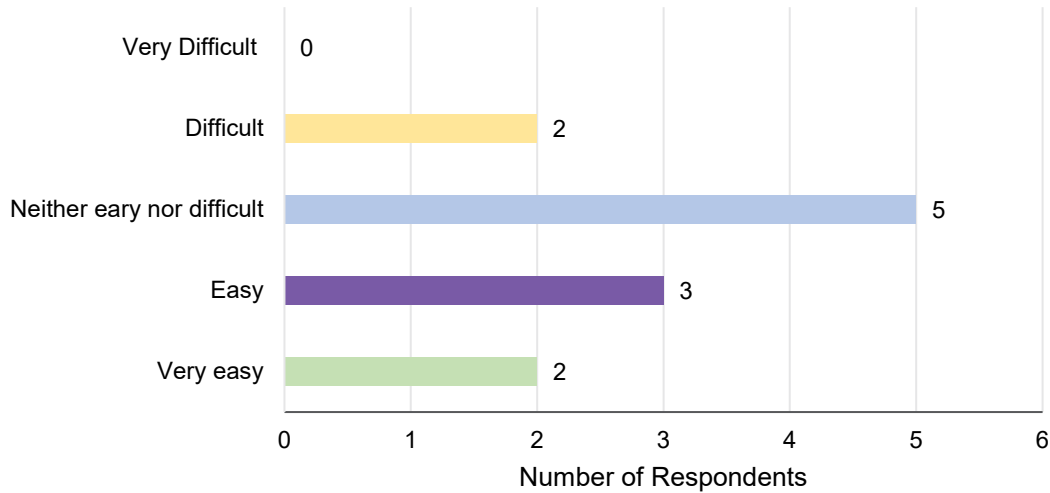
79% of respondents are aware of Circles Advocacy. 44% are aware of Barnardo's Here4U, 43% are aware of Who Cares? Scotland and 20% are aware of other services such as; Voiceability, Ayr Housing Aid Centre, Social Security Scotland, South Ayrshire Carers Centre and East Ayrshire Advocacy.

4. Do you know where to signpost or how to refer members of the public to advocacy services?



63% of respondents know where to signpost and do so within their role. 13% of respondents are aware of the information but do not need to signpost within their role. 34% of respondents were not sure how to signpost or support someone to access advocacy services.

5. How did you find accessing advocacy services in South Ayrshire?



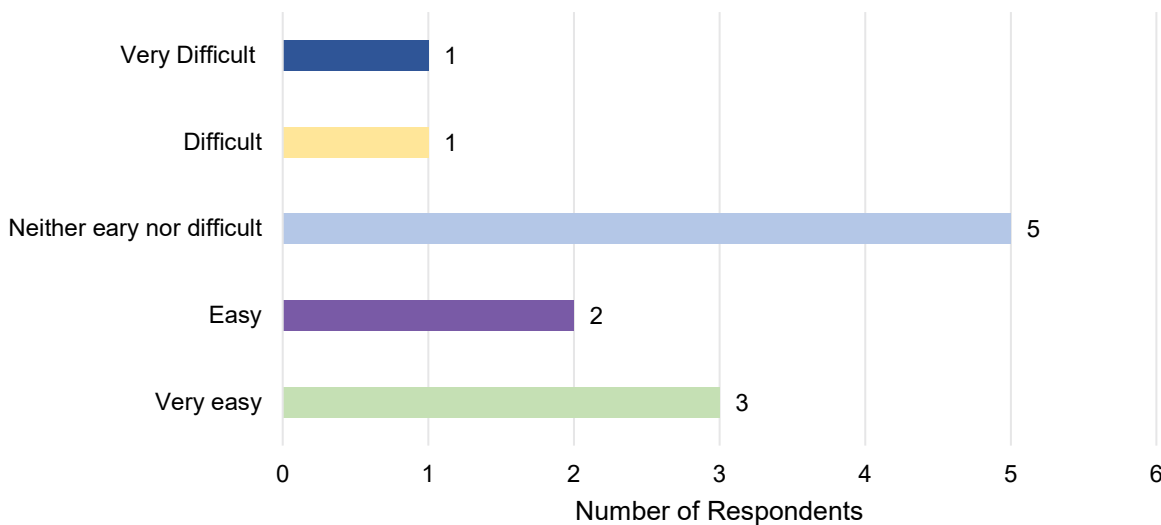
43% of respondents found accessing advocacy services neither easy nor difficult. 25% of respondents found accessing advocacy easy and 16% found it difficult. 16% of respondents found accessing advocacy very easy.

6. How did you find the support from advocacy services?



83% of respondents found support from advocacy services somewhat helpful.

7. Was it easy for you to express your views through your advocate?



42% of respondents found expressing their views neither easy nor difficult. 42% of respondents found expressing their views somewhat easy and 16% of respondents found expressing their views somewhat difficult.

8. What do you think could improve advocacy services within South Ayrshire?

This was an open-ended question for respondents to type out their suggestions and feedback. Four themes have been highlighted:

- Awareness Raising,
- Training,
- Communication/Partnership Working, and
- Accessibility

Awareness Raising:

47% of responses to this question highlighted awareness raising as an issue. A significant number of people told us they are unaware of advocacy services in South Ayrshire and suggested a variety of methods to improve awareness such as: posters and flyers in council offices, GP surgery's, local shops, buses and social media. It was also suggested advocacy services could visit teams to deliver talks on what advocacy is and what services they provide.

Training:

A push for training has been highlighted in the responses. Respondents suggested LearnPro modules for all HSCP staff in addition to specialist training for those who directly link and signpost to advocacy services. This would improve the quality of referrals as a base knowledge would be in place.

Communication/Partnership Working:

18% of responses mentioned the need to improve communication between services. There were suggestions to host networking events, provide update newsletters across organisations and compile a summary document to contain all service contact details.

Accessibility:

18% of respondents mentioned accessibility issues. Limiting criteria was mentioned and many felt that advocacy capacity should be increased across the board with less eligibility criteria. It was suggested an automatic offer of advocacy for those with a learning disability would be beneficial. The referral forms were also highlighted as timeous and very in depth which staff do not always have the capacity to complete.

Focus Groups

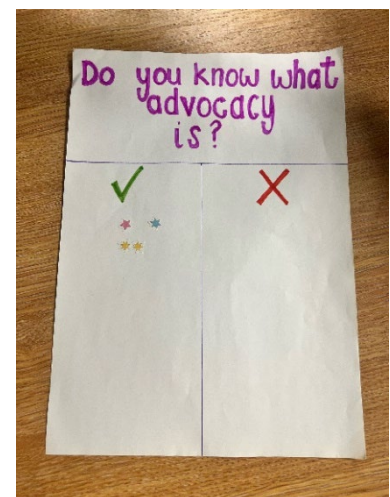
As part of the development of the Independent Advocacy Strategic Plan the HSCP hosted various focus groups.

Adult Carers Reference Group

On the 11th of April, four members of the Adult Carers Reference Group attended an in person focus group.

The first activity the focus group took part in was to establish the groups awareness of advocacy. The group answered the question 'Do you know what advocacy is?'. All four members in attendance were aware of advocacy and this was consolidated through a discussion on the different types of advocacy options available through the various advocacy services currently available in South Ayrshire. This conversation also highlighted who has the right to advocacy and how carers can access advocacy if they feel they need it.

None of the members of this group had used advocacy services themselves but understood how important advocacy is, particularly for carers.



The next activity was the magic wand activity. Here the group was asked if they had a magic wand how would they improve the provision of advocacy in South Ayrshire. The three main themes to emerge from the activity were:

- Awareness raising,
- Staff knowledge and training, and
- Accessibility



Awareness Raising:

The group agreed a key focus of the strategy should be awareness raising and ensuring people in South Ayrshire know what advocacy is. Suggestions were made that this could be done by:

- Updating the Partnership website to highlight what advocacy is, who it is for and where people can access it.
- Promotion of advocacy through channels such as; local radio, bus adverts, local newspapers and sending newsletters to Partners.
- Outreach work – have advocacy workers go out into GPs, bus shelters, libraries, dental practices, opticians, and chemists to spread the word and raise awareness.

Staff Knowledge and Training:

To improve people's experience of accessing advocacy it was suggested that staff should be trained to know what advocacy is, who is eligible to receive support from advocacy and how to signpost people to the services available in South Ayrshire. The group agreed developing strong relationships across all Partners is key in making this successful.

Accessibility:

The group highlighted the importance of accessibility for people using advocacy services. It was felt the Partnership should promote a 'no closed-door' approach and ensure that people are using advocacy services in an inviting environment.

Young Carers – Carrick Academy



On the 17th of April two young carers, who are senior students at Carrick Academy, attended a focus group. Due to the size of the focus group an informal chat took place as opposed to focused activities.

Both of the young people had heard of advocacy and the services that provide advocacy to young people in South Ayrshire. However, they were a bit

unsure of the exact details of what an advocacy worker is and the types of support they can provide.

They were asked the magic wand question – if they had a magic wand how would they improve the provision of advocacy in South Ayrshire. The key themes that emerged from this conversation were:

- Education/Awareness raising,
- Referral Support, and
- Partners working together

Education/Awareness Raising:

The young people agreed that education should be a key point in the strategy. To raise awareness of the services available in South Ayrshire it was suggested that schools could hold assemblies where advocacy services can attend and share what they do and who can access the services.

Another idea was to teach the teachers training where all teachers would be taught about advocacy in South Ayrshire so they can be the knowledge base in schools. It was also suggested this could be rolled out into college and university.

‘If you try to fix a system but people don’t know the system is there, what’s the point?’

Referral Support:

The young people said in an ideal world they would like people to be able to self-refer into advocacy services and there would be support available if they so required.

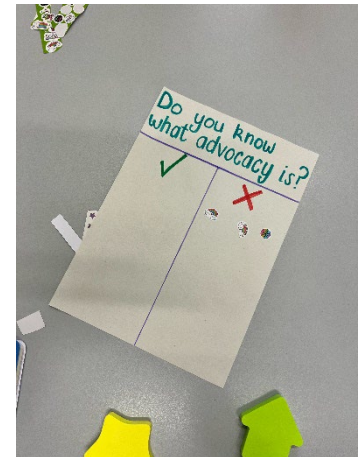
Partners Working Together:

The young people agreed that for advocacy services to be successful and reach the people they need to, Partners need to work together and communicate. It was suggested Partners work together to provide holistic environments for advocacy work to take place to ensure people are supported where they feel safe.

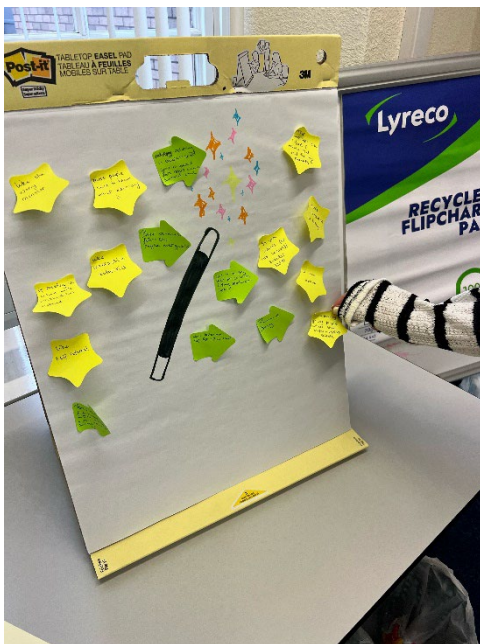
Information/Engagement Session

On the 18th of April the Partnership and the Carers Centre came together to host an advocacy information session for young carers. This was attended by two young carers aged 10 and 11, one Young Carers Support Worker, two Advocacy Support Workers from Barnardo's and two Planning and Performance Officers from the Health and Social Care Partnership.

The first part of the session was to establish the young people's understanding of advocacy. To do this they were asked the question 'Do you know what advocacy is?'. The young people as well as the Young Carers Support Worker placed a sticker in the box that best reflected their knowledge. All three participants advised they were not sure what advocacy was through the sticker activity.



The next part of the session was an information session from the Barnardo's Advocacy Workers where they explained what advocacy is and what work they do in South Ayrshire. The staff answered questions from the young carers and the Young Carers Support Worker to consolidate their knowledge. After the Q and A session the Advocacy Workers shared some of the resources they use when working with young people and let the Young Carers try the resources for themselves.



The last part of the session was the magic wand activity. Here the group was asked if they had a magic wand how would they improve the provision of advocacy in South Ayrshire. The Advocacy Workers were also encouraged to take part in this exercise. The main themes to emerge from the activity were:

- Awareness raising,
- Interactive ways of working,
- Communication, and
- Accessibility

Awareness Raising:

The group agreed sessions like this one in the Carers Centre could happen on a regular basis to raise awareness of what advocacy is, what services are available in South Ayrshire for young people and how to access them. It was suggested events or talks could take place in schools with a focus of advocacy being everybody's business.

It was also suggested the Advocacy Plan itself should be promoted across Partner Organisations.

Interactive Ways of Working:

The Young Carers agreed that interactive visual ways of working with young people is best to get the most out of sessions and keep the session interesting. They felt this is particularly important when working with young people in a school setting as it is nice to get a break from handwritten work.

Communication:

Improving communication between services was highlighted as something that could improve advocacy provision in South Ayrshire. Consistency across services would in turn mean the right children are being referred into advocacy at the time they need it most. It was suggested an automatic referral should be made for those on the Child Protection register.

Accessibility:

The Young Carers agreed support should be holistic and in a place that is best for those being supported whether that is in school, at home, in a coffee shop or a walk along the beach.

The group agreed it would be good for the Strategy to be accessible for young people to read. They suggested an additional easy read option should be available.

One to One Interviews

Advocacy Service Users were offered a one-to-one interview. These interviews were offered on any day of the week at any time, including after 'work hours,' to encourage uptake. Three people, who all use Circles Network advocacy took up the offer. The interviews took place on the 26th and 29th of April in the Circles Network office in Ayr. For the purpose of this report all names have been changed.

The interview process was an informal chat that covered the following questions:

- How did you access advocacy services and how did you find accessing them?
- How is/was the support you receive/received?
- Is/was it easy to express your views through your advocate?
- What do you think could improve advocacy services in South Ayrshire?

The key themes to emerge from the activity were:

- Feeling supported and valued,
- Information sharing, and
- Awareness raising

Feeling Supported and Valued:

All three interviewees felt both supported and valued by Circles Advocacy. Bill told us the people at Circles were great and he couldn't ask for nicer people. He said everyone is helpful and really care for him. Susan agreed, telling us the service she receives is fantastic. She told us the service does a phenomenal job of conveying her opinions for her as she finds it easy to share her views. Wilma told us she trusts her advocacy worker to

share her views. She said her advocacy worker was the only person who truly listened to her as they don't only care for her advocacy requests but her emotional wellbeing too.

'He listens and values what I have to say.'

'I canny thank these people enough, I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for them.'

'I wouldn't know where to turn without them.'

'These people make the impossible possible.'

Information Sharing:

All participants highlighted information sharing as a key aspect of the advocacy support they receive. Bill told us his advocacy worker helps him to understand forms and appointments when dealing with health and housing. Without advocacy he said he would be lost and would find attending any appointments difficult. Susan had a similar view to Bill. She shared that her advocacy worker helps her understand forms and have maximised her benefits and improved her financial situation. Wilma said similar things, she told us that her advocacy worker gives her all the information she needs to support her when communicating with social work.

'Helps me understand forms.'

'They give me all the information I need.'

Awareness Raising:

When asked what could improve advocacy in South Ayrshire Bill told us the service is good and he has no complaints. However, Susan and Wilma agreed more could be done to raise awareness of what advocacy is and the services available in South Ayrshire. Susan suggested raising awareness through promotion in newsletters, flyers, websites, and information sharing sessions. Wilma suggested similar things and stressed there should be no wrong door when trying to access advocacy support.

Champions Boards

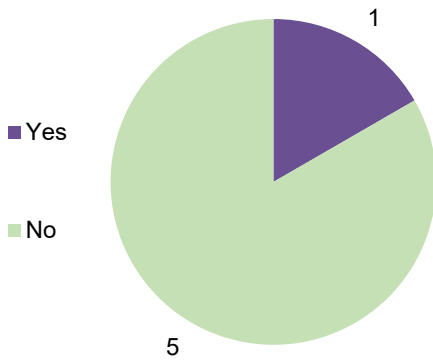
We linked in with the Champions Boards across South Ayrshire to understand their views on advocacy. Young people aged 10 to 22 were asked the following questions:

- Do you know what advocacy is?
- Can you explain what advocacy is?
- Do you use any advocacy services?
- If you do what is good or bad about it?
- Are you aware of any advocacy services in South Ayrshire?
- How could we improve advocacy in South Ayrshire?

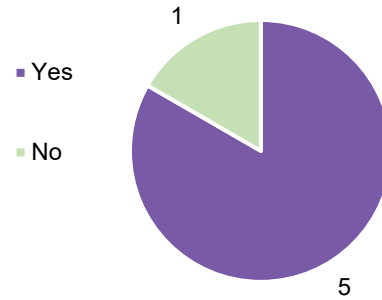
Girvan Champions Board

On the 16th of April 6 members of the Girvan Champions Board told us their views on advocacy in the Carrick Opportunities Centre.

Do you know what advocacy is?



Are you aware of any advocacy services in South Ayrshire?



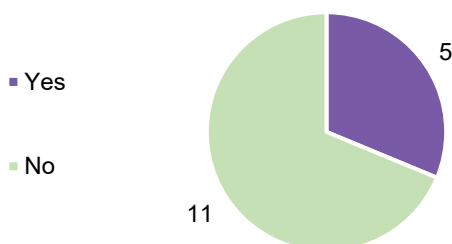
83% of young people at the Girvan group did not know what advocacy is, however, the same percentage of young people knew of advocacy services in South Ayrshire. The one young person who knew what advocacy is and uses advocacy services said their advocacy worker helps get their view across and prevents them from being stressed about meetings.

All the young people agreed **awareness raising** should be a focus for advocacy in South Ayrshire. They agreed not enough people know what advocacy is and work needs to be done through things like information sessions and social media. They agreed there will be young people out there who could really benefit from advocacy but do not know what it is.

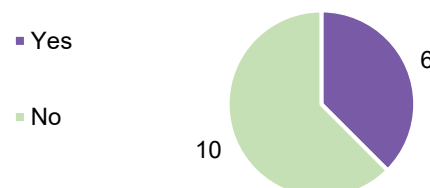
Ayr Champions Board

On the 25th of April 16 members of the Ayr Champions Board told us their views on advocacy in the Domain youth centre in Ayr.

Do you know what advocacy is?



Are you aware of any advocacy services in South Ayrshire?



Of the 16 young people asked, 31% did know what advocacy is and 38% knew of advocacy services in South Ayrshire. Three young people at the group use advocacy services. They told us the service they receive is good as they help them understand information and support their emotional wellbeing. The young people who have an advocacy worker agreed they would not change anything about the service they receive.



Again, the key improvement theme that emerged from the group is awareness raising. The young people told us we need to make people aware of what advocacy is and how to access it. It was suggested to go into schools to raise awareness and knowledge of advocacy. The young people also said ensuring people know what advocacy is means young people will get the help at the right time.

Ayr Academy Champions Board

On the 30th of April 10 members of the Ayr Academy Champions Board told us their views on advocacy in Ayr Academy. None of the young people knew what advocacy is, nor had heard of any advocacy services in South Ayrshire. Due to this limited knowledge, they did not know how advocacy could be improved in South Ayrshire.

Supper Club

The Supper Club is a club for those who live in South Ayrshire, have a learning disability, are aged 50 or over, and would like to spend time with others in a safe space. On the 1st of May the Supper Club answered some questions about advocacy. In attendance there were 17 members and 5 carers.

Out of the 17 in attendance only 5 people knew what advocacy is with 2 people having used advocacy services. When asked if they were aware of any advocacy services in South Ayrshire no service names were mentioned but the members of the group did know that family and friends can advocate for them.

When asked what could improve advocacy in South Ayrshire the group agreed services could be better advertised as many people are unaware of what advocacy is and where to access it.